Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada
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THE "P.R." LETTER BAG.

[*The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of Correspondents.*]

DEAR EDITOR,—I heard last year, on good authority, a tale of animal sagacity, which, from its bearings upon education, ought to find its way into the *Parents' Review*.

Anyone well acquainted with animals knows how trustworthy their impressions of character and conduct often are, but we seldom find that they act upon these views as definitely as in the instance I am about to relate.

A gentleman one day, while strolling about a certain provincial town, met one of the oddest little processions it had ever been his luck to see. First came a small baby in a perambulator, pushed along by a large policeman. A dog (of what breed I do not know) walked beside them and wagged his tail, with a look of conscious possession. Some yards behind came a dejected young woman of the nurse-maid class, accompanied by the inevitable little crowd of street children, always ready to gather where anything unusual is going on. The whole combination was so strange, that the gentleman could not help stopping the party to enquire for what crime such a very small baby had been taken into custody. He received the following explanation.

The dog was an old dog, for some years in the baby's family; the nurse-maid a new nurse-maid, only a few weeks in charge. When out walking on a country road the latter had, for some reason, slapped the baby, and the dog, who entirely disapproved of corporal punishment for his little charge, flew at her and kept her at bay. The girl did not dare to touch the perambulator from fear of the dog, and she could not go away and leave the baby, so in the same spot about a quarter of an hour later, a passing policeman found them. The nurse explained the situation to him, and to her great relief the dog was graciously pleased to allow the man to wheel the baby home.

What the baby's mother thought of the adventure I never heard, but it is to be hoped the dog's enlightened theories of education were properly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

HELEN WEBB.

DEAR EDITOR,—I think your readers will be glad to be reminded that the 2nd Winter Session of the Girls' Games Club begins in October. Last year Hockey was most popular and most successful, the club winning its three matches with great ease. Some of the members had never played before, and I heard from many parents that "Hockey Days" were marked by improved mental work and general tone. This

last Summer I started three children's days for *Cricket*, in addition to the elder girls' teams. Miss Ward sent up some 25 children, and Miss Patterson, another member of the Union, took up a contingent of 8 from S. Audley Street. I do not think that *Hockey* is a suitable game for children *under* twelve, but I very much hope that parents and teachers will support our Club this term for girls over that age.

I am, yours sincerely, H. FRANKLIN,

9, Pembridge Gardens. Chairman Girls' Games Club.

DEAR MADAM.—I should like to recommend "Le guide du lecteur," par J. B. Duvernoy, op 281. Lemoine et Fils, 17, Rue Pigalle, Paris—5 francs. It is an excellent book for teaching beginners to read music. It is simpler and more gradual than Kunz's Canons (recommended by Mrs. Spencer Curwen); also "Instructive Melodische," Jonstücke für dos pianoforte, zu vier Händen, von, Heinr. Enckhausen, Keft 1. 1 mark, 50 pf. A little book of duets, arranged progressively for reading, the first very easy.

"La technique du piano," par Henri Gernier, op 28, Leipzig, Orto Junne, Bruxelles, Schott Frères, 6 francs, is the very best book of technical studies I know, because it begins with very simple ones, easy enough for the youngest child, and yet goes on to the most advanced exercises. It can be had with the explanations written in French or German.

Believe me, yours truly, H. de F.

DEAR EDITOR.—I should like to suggest an easy and successful plan to your readers, which I have found leads to the larger sale of the *Parents' Review*. I told our principal bookseller that if he would order two extra numbers and keep them on his counter, I would take them if they did not sell. If the two sold at once, he was, of course, to replace them. We began this arrangement last May, and so far I have only had one number returned at the end of the month, and the bookseller tells me that he has got more regular subscribers, and sells at least 12 single copies per month. As we live in a very small country town, readers in a large place might in this way greatly assist the circulation of our much loved Review.

F. E. B.

THE HOME-TEACHING OF RELIGION.

DEAR EDITOR,—In the last Report of the Church of England Sunday School Institute, Section IV. is headed, "What the Institute has yet to do." May I ask your thoughtful consideration of the following letter?

The object of the Institute is described (on page 4) as "the extension and improvement of Church of England Sunday Schools." I cannot doubt that the founders of the Institute had it in their minds that one of the most imperative of all religious duties is to hand God's laws on to the next generation; that God had made His laws known to them for that very purpose. "He gave Israel a law which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, that their posterity might know it;" and this duty it is obvious that the Society impresses strongly on its teachers.

But I take it that "the extension and improvement of Church of England Sunday Schools" is really the secondary object of the Institute, the means, not the end; the object of the Sunday-schools themselves being the instruction of the scholars in all things necessary to their faith and to the practical duties of life; that the Institute was founded not for the benefit of the teachers but of the scholars, and through them of the nation from generation to generation, so that the final object of the Institute is to help to make England a thoroughly Christian nation.

To make England a thoroughly Christian nation, it must not only be generally recognised that it is the duty of our nation to hand on God's laws to the next generation as much as it was the duty of the Jews, but also that it is as much the duty now of every father to teach them at home to his own children as it was then, '*Thou* (singular, to the father, not the nation) shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"—that is the "line upon line, here a little and there a little"—which it is physically impossible for Sunday-school or day-school teachers to give.

Visitors who work among the poorest classes find great neglect of this Home teaching. Sunday-school teachers find that if no teaching goes on at home, their own teaching makes comparatively little impression. Visitors find it very difficult to make the parents understand that their duty has not been fulfilled by sending their children to the Sunday-school; that it is quite right for them to get the Sunday-school to supplement their own teaching, but that they cannot depute their own duty as parents to anyone.

Since this subject was brought strongly to my mind last year, I have made various investigations as to how it is that such an obvious duty is not only so much neglected, but so little recognised; and I have found the following conditions:—

First.—I have not found a single school where the future duty of the scholars to teach their children is taught.

Secondly.—I have found that school teachers "magnify their office" to such an extent that they will write or speak of the parents co-operating with the school teachers, instead of the teachers co-operating with the parents, thus putting their own work first instead of second in importance.

Thirdly.—After much correspondence I learnt from your secretary that he could not "single out a lesson precisely on the subject" among all your publications.

The facts of the case then are these:—"More than a century has passed" since Sunday-schools were established in England, many generations of scholars have passed through the schools and become parents, and yet the duty of Home-teaching continues (many say increasingly) to be neglected.

The duty is said to be necessarily implied in the general teaching, but the facts of the present day show that the inference of the duty has not presented itself as necessary, and that it is not safe to allow this, more than any other plain duty, to be learnt by implication instead of being taught by clear and direct precept.

It also appears that it is not at all universally recognised, even among

the teachers, that one of the very highest aims of the Sunday-school should be to firmly establish the Home-teaching of religion throughout the land.

Here and there one school or one teacher may distinctly teach this, but it is so very generally not taught that there is surely a sound hope of good results if it could be made a universal subject of emphatic instruction.

Sunday-school teachers need not fear that their occupation would be gone if they succeeded in exalting Home-teaching to its proper position, for they must know well enough that their teaching is far more valued by the parents who teach their own children than by those who do not.

Surely the firm establishment of the Home-teaching of Religion is a noble work that the "Institute has yet to do."

Your obedient servant,

MARY BULLAR.

DEAR EDITOR,—I venture to remind our members of the Exhibition of Natural History Collections which it is proposed to hold again in London in the autumn, and trust that they will encourage their children to prepare them carefully. I hope that further particulars as to the arrangements will appear in next month's issue.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY PERRIN, *Hon. Org. Sec.*

DEAR EDITOR,—I have an almost new copy of the *Paradise of Childhood*, published by Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., which I do not require, and shall be glad to let any of your readers have for eight shillings. Address—M. A. R., Little Headfoldswood, Lexwood, Billingshurst, Sussex.